

J. A. Mitchell

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

· LIFE ·

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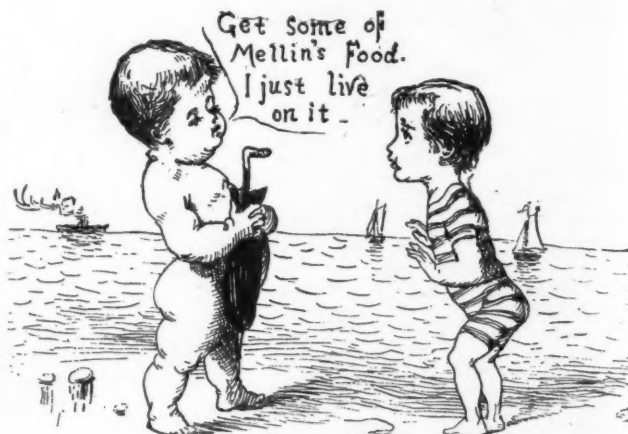
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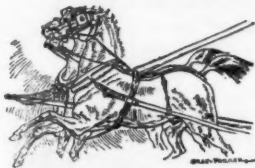
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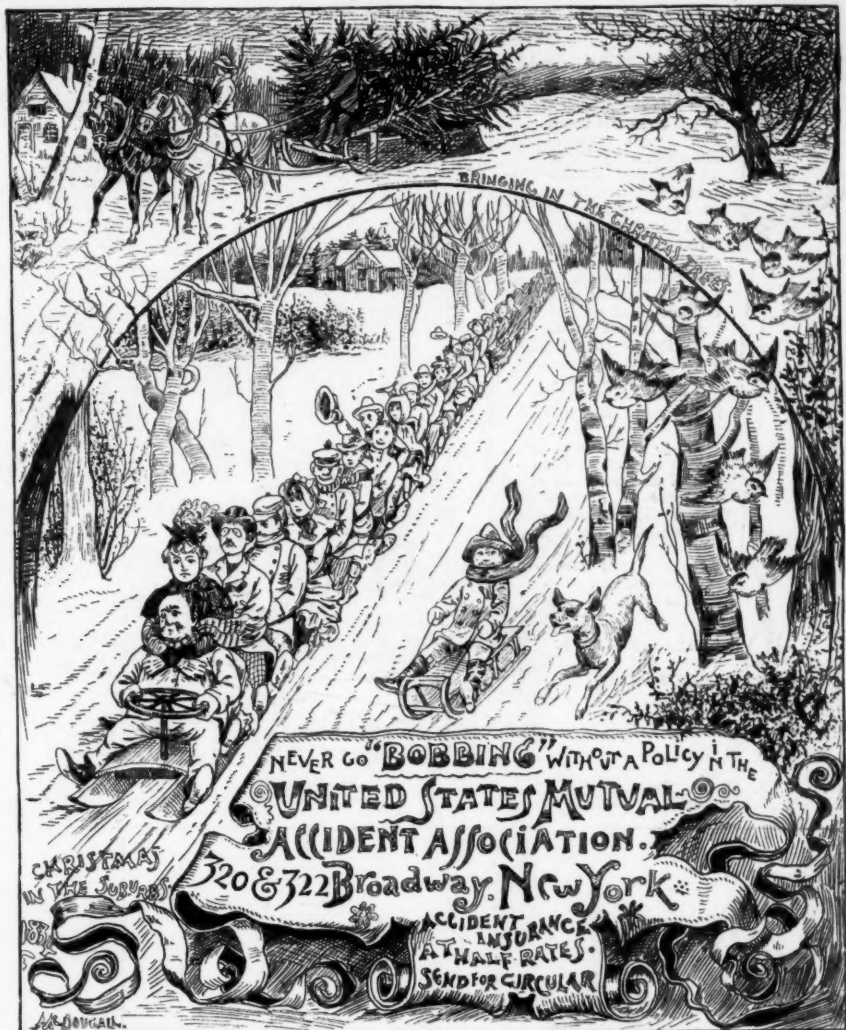
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VOL. IV.
No. 102.

• LIFE •

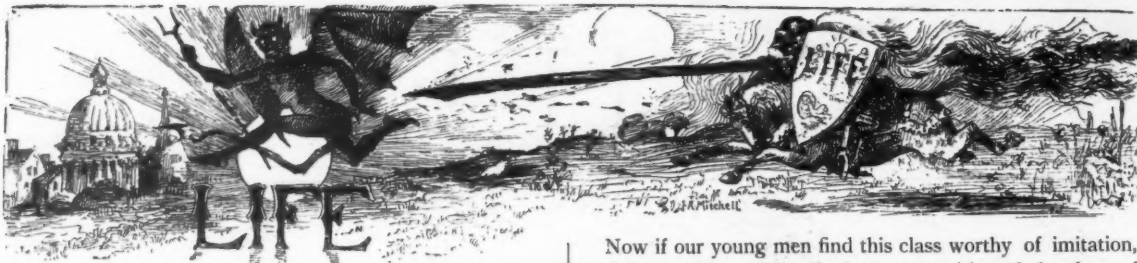
DEC. 11TH,
1884.



INTERNATIONAL.

Lord Heavydebt: I HAVE GOT TO DO SOMETHING, BY JOVE! AND YOUR TIN IS THE NEEDFUL, YOU KNOW. I HATE YOUR BEASTLY LOUD VOICE AND MANNERS, BUT, ER — LET'S MARRY, YOU KNOW.

Miss Doubledollar: I LIKE SOMEBODY ELSE BETTER, BUT JUST *think* OF THE STYLE I COULD PUT ON—WELL, I AM YOUR GIRL!



VOL. IV. DEC. 11TH, 1884. NO. 102.

1155 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Published every Thursday, \$5 a year in advance, postage free. Single copies, 10 cents. Back numbers can be had by applying to this office. Vol. I., 50 cents per copy; Vols. II. and III. at regular rates.

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THE President's Message is the last convincing proof that this gentleman should be dealt with severely and according to his just deserts by the people.

Nothing short of a sentence of imprisonment for a term of years in the U. S. Senate should be thought of, and if at the conclusion of that he should still prove guilty of the crime of statesmanship, a four years' incarceration in the White House would be the proper thing to inflict upon him.

* * *

THIS is the season of the year when the man who has not read the President's Message at all, and the man who has read the first five paragraphs thereof, grow heated over an argument as to its merits.

And they usually conclude that it is most commonplace as compared with those of past years, of which they knew about as much.

* * *

WHY do fathers tear their hair, and mothers weep because their daughters marry coachmen?

Let the average father gaze on the average son and what does he see?

A youth clad in a Newmarket coat, black silk hat, heavy kid gloves of a pronounced yellow; his conversation mainly concerning horses and the breeding of dogs; his intellect decorated with mutton-chop or whiskers is strong enough perhaps for the commonplaces of society which he affects to despise, and the greater part of his time spent in driving or at the kennel club, of which he is a leading member.

Such is the girl's brother.

Now what is the coachman? Ask a stranger to distinguish him from the brother. The chances are even that he will be able to do so.

And yet the father of this son calls the coachman a miserable looking creature with no style about him; says that he keeps bad company and talks of nothing but the stables, is crazy to get into good society—as if this were a fault!—and has no brain to speak of.

Now if our young men find this class worthy of imitation, and if our girls are brought in contact with such brothers of their own or other girls' brothers and admire these base imitations, is it to be wondered at that they condescend to admire and in extreme cases to marry the original and genuine article?

Please regard this, not in the light of a plea for coachman marriages—far from it!—but in the light of a plea for a higher tone of dress.

If gentlemen must dress like coachmen, by all means compel the coachmen to dress like gentlemen.

We should be able to distinguish the two classes, or take the consequences.

* * *

OUR artist indulges at this merry season of the year in some impressions of Christmas, past and present, all of which we are accustomed to term joys, and many of which, were it not for the fear that we would be dubbed churlish, we would openly describe as agonies.

There is the aged maiden, as numerous to-day as in the years gone by, who with expectant smile stands demurely beneath the mistletoe, while the beruffled gallants so eager for the fray but one short moment since when a pretty miss was standing there, are now intensely interested in the most intensely uninteresting of family portraits.

With what vividness is portrayed the perilous paths of our Puritanic forefathers as they betake themselves churchward, closely followed in their ways of righteousness by the heathen red man! And with what a "merrie cast of countenance" does the knock-kneed brother Barebones repeat,

In Stained Glass Attitude

That Pleasing Platitude,

A Merrie Xmas.

The Rev. Thankful Smith with his brother Poker Players from Thompson Street speaks for himself, while the small boy with the goutish-looking stocking clasped to his breast is speechless with joy over his possessions, and agony over the consumption of parcel upon parcel of red, white and blue sweets; each sensation counteracting the other, leaving him at least in a contented frame of mind.

Last, but by no means least, we have old Santa Claus trying hard to look merry at having to exchange his downward climb in a good old-fashioned sooty chimney for an ascension in a new-fangled elevator flue.

Somehow or other old Santa Claus and progress do not get along well together, and the new-fashioned flats are altogether out of place in the season of merry-making. At least until Santa can purchase a new pair of reindeer, or patent a bouncer which shall land him higher than one of his kites can fly.



WBJA would faine
 Pe lovesick swaine
 Faire Mistresse Marjorie de-
 taine
 Beneathe y^e festive Pistletor *
 * Albeit to steale a kiss or two,
 Butte Mistresse Marjorie sor
 slye
 Alle throughe hys little game
 doth spyre,
 And eke an angrie hand applye
 Unto hys eare y^e slye young for,
 This were a sorrie Christmasse
 bor.

BY THE WAY.

THE Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette* speaks of a petrified
 girl.
 She was probably rocked too much in her infancy.

* * *

ORDINARILY we are sorry for the man who, as the
 saying goes, "has got 'em again," but in the present
 instance we are devoutly thankful that the owner of the boa-
 constrictor, which recently escaped in the Central Park, has
 recovered his property.

* * *

THE book of poems, "Among the Daisies," was not
 compiled by a Vassar Professor, as its title would
 seem to imply.

THE discovery of a natural gas region has been an-
 nounced.

Naturally enough it is situated in Ohio, the home of the
 Campaign Orator.

* * *

CONGRESS has opened, but the cholera most fortunately
 has not yet arrived.

Congress, Christmas and Cholera! What an alliteration!
 Rum, Romanism and Rebellion, born of Blaine's Burchard's
 brain, dwindles in comparison.

* * *

AN enterprising typo not a thousand miles away from our
 printing office set up "Heine's Book of Songs" as
 "Hen's Book of Lays."

He has gone to that bourne whence dead matter never
 returns.

In other words he has been distributed.



A CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

Young Hostess: GOOD-BYE, MR. CANDOUR, I'M SO SORRY I'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE MORE OF YOU.
Mr. Candour: MODESTY FORBIDS MY SAYING THE SAME TO YOU, MRS. FOLLIBUD.



SOCIAL TIN-TYPES.

BEING THE IMPRESSIONS OF MR. EDGAR SPIGOT.

No. 10,000.

THE THIN-SKINNED AUTHOR.

WHEN I first knew Reuben Rodney he was the writer of attenuated verses, mostly about holly-hocks, wall flowers, cabbage heads, and other agricultural products. He put a great deal of his personality into his work. But the unsuspecting world did not give him an enthusiastic welcome. There were rumors that Tennyson had offered to pension him for life if he would cease writing, and that Longfellow had asked him to take a trip around the world at his expense; but these were always traced to interested sources. So the fair God Fame jilted his Muse and she pined away in melancholy loneliness.

A long time after the death of a Great Poet it began to be noised about in the advertising columns of a venal press that the aforesaid Great Poet once said that he "hoped more from Reuben Rodney than from any of the younger American poets." It is a sad fact that the Great Poet was so much dead that he could not deny having delivered this oracular utterance. On the other hand it is perhaps fortunate that he did not live to realize that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." The "multitudinous band of scribblers which we call critics," were, however, birds of sufficient longevity not to be caught with such chaff, and continued to estimate Reuben at his true value.

He tried his hand at prose and wrote a really clever autobiography called "A Gentleman Loafer." Encouraged by its reception he wrote "An Ambitious Flirt," and persuaded the Editor of the daily *Claim Everything* that the "best people" demanded that sort of moral sugar-and-water in the Sunday issue as an antidote to the mendacity and underhand stabs of the "Broadway Liar."

Rodney thought that the public had at last begun to appreciate him, and he gauged their appetite for his works by his inordinate vanity. He published a *quasi* novel every month or two—"Tinkling Bangles," "The Adventures of a Grass-Widow," and other specimens of literary bubble-blowing.

The multitudinous scribblers began to poke fun at Rodney's numerous attempts at man-millinery and embroidery. He winced when stung by the truth, and, in order to get even with those who did not appreciate him, he began a series of articles in the Sunday *Claim Everything* called "Social Tin-Types" in which he clumsily satirized them. As the number of those who did not appreciate Mr. Rodney was legion, his series promised to run on forever. In No. 9999 (published on Nov. 30th), he delivered a melancholy wail about the power of critics to "kill a weak life." If this be true I fear that

even now Reuben Rodney is in the land where the literary mosquitoes cease from stinging and the multitudinous scribblers are at rest.

So I have written this "Social Tin-Type," No. 10,000, in his memory.

Hic-Jacet—Reuben Rodney—The victim of a Gauze Epidermis through which his too Expansive Vanity escaped into the Upper Air.

DROCH.

* * *

THE resources of *The Youth's Companion* are international in the fullest sense. Of the eight serials which it will publish during 1885, four are by Americans (Trowbridge, Stockton, Fawcett and Stephens), one is by a Frenchman (Alphonse Daudet), one by a Scotch woman (Mrs. Oliphant), one by an Englishman (George Manville Fenn), and one by an English woman (Mrs. Macquoid, the author of "Patty").

BOOKS RECEIVED.

GENIUS and Character of Emerson. Lectures at the Concord School of Philosophy. Edited by F. B. Sanborn. J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston.

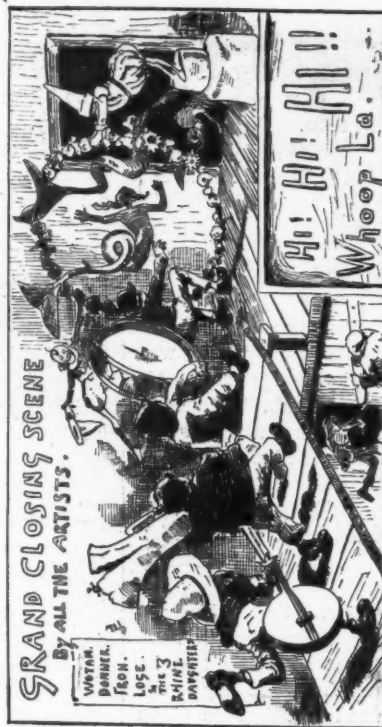
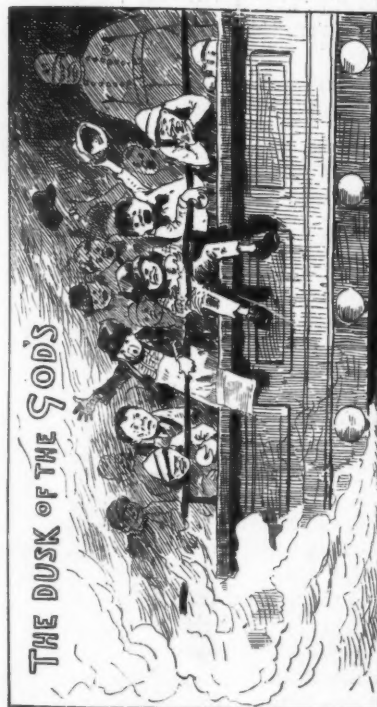
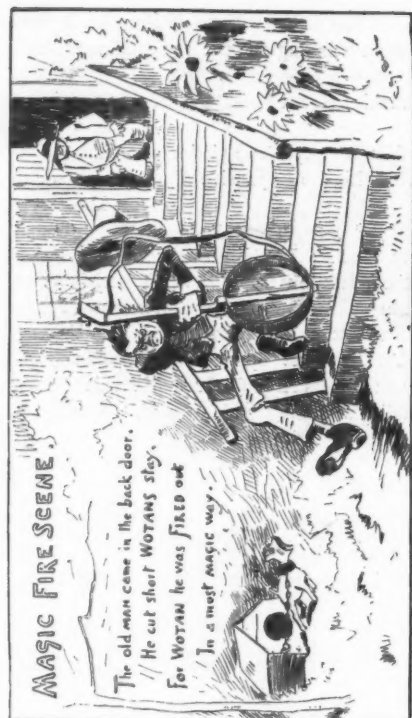
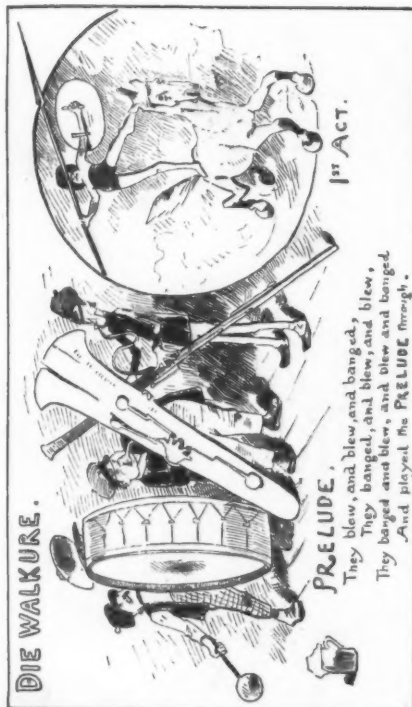
About People, by Kate Gannett Wells. J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston.

Stories by American Authors, Vol. VIII. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.

The Common Sense Household Calendar, by Marion Harland. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.



"WHAT IS ALL THIS NOISE AND BUSTLE?"



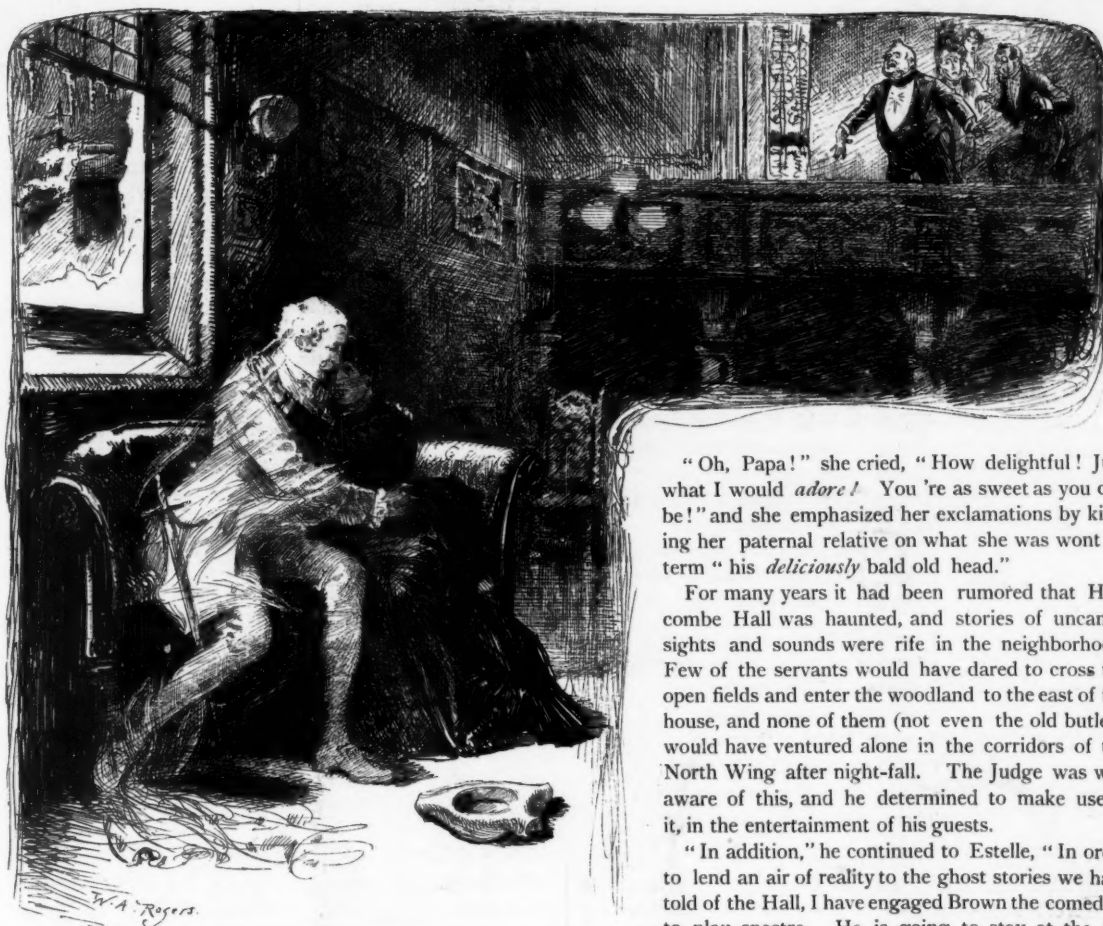
AN UNPROVOKED ASSAULT.

A COUNTRY contemporary devotes a quarter of a column to editorial consideration of a man who "shot his gun in church." This certainly is reprehensible, as it would have created less unseemly noise had he stabbed the weapon instead of shooting it. The report does not state whether the gun is fatally hurt.

SWEET MEMORIES OF WAGNER.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

A RECENT writer objects to duelling on moral grounds. So far we are with him. From some points of view, however, it is a glorious old custom, and if it always resulted as in a recent Western duel where both the principals were killed, it might prove a very efficient means of ridding our population of a very undesirable surplus.



THE MYSTERY OF HOLCOMBE HALL.

BY CARLSBAD.

THE broad acres of the Holcombe Estate were clothed with a mantle of glittering white, and the merry music of distant chimes was faintly borne by the frosty air over the snow-clad hills. Shouts of joyous laughter rang through the Hall, while gay groups of young people played "kiss-in-the-ring," and the whole house was pervaded with a cheerful odor of burning back-logs, steaming plum-pudding, peppermint drops and paregoric—you're right!—*of course* it was Christmas! What else could explain the emptied stockings hanging from the mantel-shelf, the seasonable greetings or the dyspepsia of the children? Nothing.

"Estelle," Judge Holcomb had said to his daughter a week before in town, "what do you say to spending the holidays out at the Hall, and having a real English Christmas with a house full of guests, a Christmas-tree, private theatricals, moonlight sleigh-rides, a fox-hunt and a pink-coat ball?"

"Oh, Papa!" she cried, "How delightful! Just what I would *adore*! You're as sweet as you can be!" and she emphasized her exclamations by kissing her paternal relative on what she was wont to term "his *deliciously* bald old head."

For many years it had been rumored that Holcombe Hall was haunted, and stories of uncanny sights and sounds were rife in the neighborhood. Few of the servants would have dared to cross the open fields and enter the woodland to the east of the house, and none of them (not even the old butler), would have ventured alone in the corridors of the North Wing after night-fall. The Judge was well aware of this, and he determined to make use of it, in the entertainment of his guests.

"In addition," he continued to Estelle, "In order to lend an air of reality to the ghost stories we have told of the Hall, I have engaged Brown the comedian to play spectre. He is going to stay at the inn and come over every evening after dark to waylay any of the men whom he can catch in dusky corners."

"What a lark," said his daughter. "Now tell me, Papa, whom you have asked—the Mansfields, I suppose, and their children, Mr. Huntley and his wife, the Horners, and May, Elsie and Isabelle; who are the men?"

"Fred Farrington and Colonel Clayton," enumerated the Judge, "the two Oliver boys, and that extremely entertaining and amiable fellow, Mr. Trotter."

"I don't like him at all, as *you* know," said Estelle in a tone of deep disappointment. "But you surely have not forgotten Harry Treharne, Papa?"

"No," replied her father.

"Then he's coming?" she asked brightly, her face lighting up again.

"Not much!" said the gentleman with decision. "Not if I know it! Here I've provided every amusement, and asked a jolly chap like Trotter, and now I suppose you're dissatisfied because I've left out that good looking, good-for-nothing, penniless Treharne! It's just like a girl!"



BALLADE OF THE GENERAL TERM.

EACH in his high official chair;
 One who presides; two plain J. J.
 Decent of mien and white of hair
 They sit there judging all the day.
 The gravity of what they say
 Bent brows and sober tones confirm;
 Brown, Jones and Robinson are they,
 Justices of the General Term.

I see the learned counsel there
 Rise up and argue, move and pray;
 Attorneys with respectful air
 Their legal accumen display.
 Serenely joyous if they may
 Of justice keep alive the germ;
 Motion and argument they weigh
 Those justices of General Term.

That court I haunt, not that I care
 For Justice in a general way;
 Nor yet because I hope to share
 With anyone a client's pay.
 The reason why I then delay
 And on the court's hard benches squirm
 Is that of Love I am the prey,—
Her father is the General Term.

ENVOY.

I look at him with dire dismay—
 Scorched by his eye I seem a worm.
 "Dismissed with costs," is what he'll say,—
 That Justice of the General Term.

E. S. M.



"Well, I don't care!" retorted Estelle. "I'll never marry that fat old Trotter, as long as I live, and I care more for — well, no matter! Of course you're very kind to me and all that, but I know I won't enjoy a *single* minute of the whole week!"

That same afternoon, she repeated the above conversation to Harry Treharne, with many additional expressions of displeasure.

"I am perfectly sure," she said in conclusion, "that in taking all this trouble and spending so much money, the *only* object that Papa has in view, is to throw me with old Trotter, and give him an opportunity to propose. But I am going to be just as *hateful* to him as I can be!" and she shook her dimpled little fist menacingly, as if the unfortunate Trotter was in reality standing before her.

On the day before Christmas, the guests arrived at the Hall, and Estelle appeared to have forgotten her disappointment at the absence of Mr. Treharne, and was in an exceptionally good humor—at least so it seemed to her father.

"Has our hired ghost come out from the city?" she asked of him during the morning.

"Not yet," said the old gentleman. "He ought to arrive this afternoon and go directly to the inn. In the evening he

will dress up and come over, entering by one of the music room windows, which is to be left unlatched for his benefit. I shall not see him at all while he is here, and if I have any orders to give him, I will send him over a note."

On Christmas Eve, as the gentlemen lingered in the dining room over their after-dinner cigars, Colonel Clayton, who had but a moment before left the room, hurriedly re-entered it and asked the Judge if he might have a word with him in private. The Colonel was excited, and he nervously clutched the Judge's coat sleeve as he talked. In broken sentences he told him how he had gone up to his room in the North Wing, and how on entering, he had found a ghastly figure seated in his easy chair—"with luminous green eyes, sir! And he was actually smoking my favorite pipe, by Jove! As I started for him he shied a book at my head and then pursued me half way down stairs, sir! Most extraordinary apparition I ever saw!" and the Colonel wiped the beads of perspiration from his brow with a trembling hand. The Judge punctuated the Colonel's remarks with "Bless my soul, Colonel!" "You do n't mean it!" "You're a man of iron nerve, sir!" and similar expressions indicative of great astonishment, mixed with admiration at the Colonel's presence of mind.

"Old family mystery, you know," he explained. "The ghost,

sir, of my ancestor, Dr. Gregory Holcombe, who died during the Revolution. Sorry he invaded your room, but bolts are of no avail, and there is n't a door in the house with a lock on it. Of course, though, a military man like yourself is absolutely fearless. Do n't mention the occurrence to the others, if you please, Colonel."

Deep and blood-curdling were the groans that resounded through the North Wing that night, and once or twice the wakeful Colonel thought he heard the clanking of a chain and muffled footsteps in the corridor.

About three in the morning, the Judge was aroused by a tremendous rumpus in the next room, which was occupied by Charley and Harry Oliver. Light in hand, he rushed in, and a scene of confusion met his eyes. The tables and chairs were overturned, and stifled cries issued from some one beneath the bed. On stooping down the Judge saw it was Charley Oliver.

"For Heaven's sake, what are you doing under there?" he asked.

"Has it gone?" said Oliver.

"What? There's nothing here!"

"D-did you me-meet it in the hall?"

"No," said the Judge. "Meet what?"

"I do n't know," replied Oliver, slowly crawling out. "It was white and about ten feet high. Its hands were cold and clammy, and it pulled us both out of bed. I went under there to see if I could n't loosen a bed slat to hit it with."

"Oh, to be sure," chuckled the Judge. "Where's your brother, Harry?"

"I guess he's in the closet looking for his pistol," replied Charley, and he added, as the Judge left the room: "I don't see what in thunder you're laughing about!"

At breakfast, the Olivers were both very reticent, and the Colonel looked as if he had spent a sleepless night.

"Estelle, my dear," said the Judge, where is your aunt Charlotte—ah, here she comes! Merry Christmas to you, aunt. Now the only absent one is Mr. Trotter. How very late he is!"

Aunt Charlotte appeared, muffled in a nubia which was wound around the hood that completely covered the back of her head. She looked very much distressed, and explained that she had severe neuralgic pains.

The meal had been almost disposed of in silence, when Mr. Trotter entered the room. With a bland smile he approached his chair, holding aloft a large gray chignon, with two pendent cork-screw curls.

"Merry Christmas! Thought I'd bring it down," he remarked. "There was a white robed person in my room last night, who left it on my bureau."

Every one, recognizing the trophy, turned towards Aunt Charlotte, and with a panic-stricken wail the old lady fainted away.

The Judge was troubled. He glanced at Estelle with a look that said, "Do n't you think this has gone far enough? Had n't I better tell them all, and discharge that impudent Brown?" but in answer she shook her head in such a decided negative that the old gentleman contented himself with writ-

ing to Brown to act at least within the bounds of propriety. He, moreover, urged each man to keep what he had seen an entire secret from the others, but while he was out at the kennels, the Colonel related his own adventure to the rest of the company, and a comparison of experiences was the result.

That very evening, as they were all sitting around the fire, Estelle, pleading a headache, left the room, and the Judge saw his long-wished-for opportunity to give Mr. Trotter a *tête-à-tête* with her.

"Ahem! Do n't you think you'd better put on a smoking-jacket, before we sit down to our whist, Trotter?" he suggested, and the latter took the hint and followed Estelle.

The Judge was well aware of his daughter's distaste for her fat old admirer, but he hoped she would succumb to his ardent declarations of affection and the prospect of forty thousand a year. He almost expected to see the pair enter in a few minutes and ask his paternal blessing. Instead, however, the door burst open, and Trotter alone staggered towards them, evidently completely overcome.

"What has happened?" cried the group. "Have you seen the ghost?"

Trotter sank into a seat and nodded assent.

"Confound that Brown! What infernal mischief has he been up to now?" exclaimed the Judge. "I might as well confess to you all that the whole matter is a joke. The spectre is Brown, the comedian, whom I foolishly hired to act the part, so you can relieve yourselves of any apprehension. Do n't mind what you've seen, Trotter—it's all a joke, man!"

"How I wish it was a joke!" moaned that individual, with his head between his hands. "How I wish it was only *Brown*, I had seen!"

"Good Heavens!" said the Judge, "Does n't my confession explain it all? Do you still think that it was anything else than Brown dressed up? There is some mystery in it that I will myself investigate—excuse me, I prefer to go alone!"

Prompted by curiosity, however, the entire company deserted Trotter and followed the Judge. They silently tiptoed after his retreating form in the direction of the North Wing; they saw him go cautiously up the stairs, open the door that led into the gallery of the music room, peer down towards its floor, and then stand transfixed with horror. The guests quietly crept in and stood in an awe-struck group behind him.

Down in the further corner of the room, the moonbeams poured in through the uncurtained window, imparting to surrounding objects a ghastly whiteness. In the middle of this moonlit space, the ghoully apparition which had disturbed so many of them sat on a small settee, and the Judge's blood ran cold in his veins as he saw his daughter, Estelle, clasped in the spectre's arms and heard her murmur, "Oh, Harry, darling, what *shall* I do if that ridiculous old Trotter proposes to me this evening? I'll have to tell him that I'm going to be Mrs. Treharne!"

HIDDEN FRUIT: the Electric Current.





Christmas Morning. Puritans on their way to church



Rev. Thank Smith. "Guess de rest ob de trip hav ter be done by prambulation, de hoss am done sit down."



Christmas Joys Supplement.

OF MISTRESSE LUCE: HER EYES.

I looke at Mistresse Luce, her eyes,
 And doe admire them moste sincerely;
 Yette whenne she turnes those orbs on me
 I must confesse my hearte feeles queerlye.
 Ye skye atte nighte does not afforde
 Two stars of more entrancyng twinkle,
 And whenne she laughes, arounde theyre sides
 Appeares a moste bewitchynge wrinkle.
 But whenne she weepes her teares obscure
 The love lighte softe withinne them glowynge;
 And now, as we are soone to wedde,
 Withe kisses I doe stoppe theyre flowynge.

S. D. S., JR.



A THEATRE PARTY AT THE STAR.

IRVING AS HAMLET—TERRY AS OPHELIA—ASSORTED
 TALENT AS HORATIO, POLONIUS, ETC.

IN THE PARTY: DUDE AND DUDELETTE, ANGLO-
 MANIAC AND ANGLOPHOBIAC, SLEEPY FEMALE AND
 CYNICAL CRITIC.

DUDE: That first act is fine, ain't it?

Dudelette: Awful.

Sleepy Female: Wish I had a libretto.

Anglomaniac: Irving is simply superb, but then he can't help it. He would be a success in anything.

Anglophobiac: Except as a leader of the ballet.

Cynical Critic: Why does he say "Frail-tea, thy name is woman?"

Ensemble: Ellen Terry is charming.

Dude: Ain't that second act immense?

Dudelette: Awful.

Sleepy Female: Why do all these swell people come in late? I did n't see the stage that act.

Anglomaniac: Did you ever see anything to equal it?

Anglophobiac: What?

Anglomaniac: That last scene, with the soliloquy, "What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?"

Anglophobiac: I neither heard nor saw it.

Anglomaniac: What!

Anglophobiac: I did not see it because Irving got behind yon post; and did not hear it because of the entrancing conversation of yon lady, on her new Worth costume.

Cynical Critic: I wish Irving would saw off his left leg!

Ensemble: How lovely Terry is!

Dude: Ain't that third act elegant? Wonder if Ham marries Ophelia?

Dudelette: Then she'd be a Hamlette.

Dude: Te-hee.

Anglophobiac: I never saw Irving walk so gracefully.

Anglomaniac: As when?

Anglophobiac: As in the players' scene when he walked across the stage on all-fours.

Cynical Critic: Methinks that howl of Hamlet's was very like a wail.

Ensemble: Backed like a whee-stle.

Dude: Did n't the King look funny in that red ulster?

Dudelette: Awful. But I thought the King's name was Claudius?

Dude: So it is.

Dudelette: Then why did Hamlet say to him "Now might I do it, Pat?"

Dude: Te-hee.

Anglomaniac: I have never seen anything to equal the power that Irving puts in that closet scene.

Anglophobiac: I have.

Anglomaniac: Where?

Anglophobiac: In the tongue of that woman in the box.

Cynical Critic: That's an awful healthy ghost.

Ensemble: Terry's equal as Ophelia does not exist.

Dude: (On the way out) How do you like Irving and Terry?

Dudelette: Awful nice. But I do n't think Hamlet is as good a play as 7-20-8.

Anglomaniac: Well, Phoby, what do you think of it?

Anglophobiac: Well, Irving's Hamlet is great enough to be a Township, but \$3.00 for a two hour tenure of an uncomfortable chair in a stuffy theatre is too much. I now think Irving is an actor, and not simply a professor of acting. His Hamlet is one of remarkable power, and shows that behind there is the mind of a scholar.

Cynical Critic: I wish Irving would not hold the cup upside down and then drink from it.

Sleepy Female: The feller that wrote that play was way behind the times. I've heard three-quarters of those remarks of Hamlet's before.

Ensemble: A better performance one rarely sees. Good night.

A MERICAN prima donnas are coming to the front. For years little Emma, who is honest but can't sing, has worked patriotic sympathy. Now we have Nevada, double-laureled by both hemispheres, and a bright promise of greatness from Alfa Norman, the young and lovely prima donna of the Carleton Opera Co. Of Miss Norman, the San Francisco papers are most enthusiastic in praise. As they are naturally disposed to carp, this argues well. Miss Norman's voice is a pure soprano, charming for its youthful sweetness, its exquisite *timbre*, its flexibility and roundness. In most difficult passages she uses it without apparent effort. Unit-ing with this, grace and youth and beauty, together with a dramatic power far above her years and experience, she is fitted for the delight of the lovers of opera, and her metropolitan *début*, which will occur in the spring, will be an event of more than ordinary interest.



FABLES FOR THE TIMES.

THE LEARNED MULE.

A YOUNG Kentucky Mule, having received an education in Paris, came home with an incurable habit of interlarding his conversation with French phrases and sentences; and would often paralyze the family by speaking French altogether.

One day the young Mule went to bed with a sick headache and immediately sent for a Fox who had just graduated in medicine.

The sick animal received the physician with a wild stare, saying as he did so,—

"Bonjour, mon ami, je vais mourir; peut-être—"

"Ah! potatoes!! they are very—"

"Ah, mon cher Rénard, vous vous trompez; je ne veux pas dire les pommes-de-terre."

"Been on another 'tear,' eh? Well, so much the worse."

The invalid's mind seemed to wander as he cried out:

"Je suis tout-à-fait accablé de ce mal-de-tête terrible."

"Yes, but you must have eaten them green."

"Ah, diable!! vous ne me comprenez pas!"

"Were any members of your family ever affected in the same way?"

"Pas que je sache."

"Ah, your pa had it, did he? Then probably it runs in the family; but I would n't have supposed that the governor ever had a spell of sickness in his life."

"Mon cher ami, je vais mourir."

"Yes, when you get a little better. How do you feel?"

"Ah, mon cher Rénard, il y a deux jours que je suis triste, malheureux, mélancolique."

"Ah, melons, colic!" cried the doctor with the enthusiasm of discovery; "the poor fellow has the cholera morbus! he may get sick in French, but I'll cure him in English."

With these words the physician pried open the patient's mouth, poured a quart of emetic down his throat, and followed it up two hours later with a blue-mass pill as large as a water melon.

MORAL:—This Fable teaches that, if you were born and raised in the United States, it will not damage your standing in society to speak English, if you understand the language.

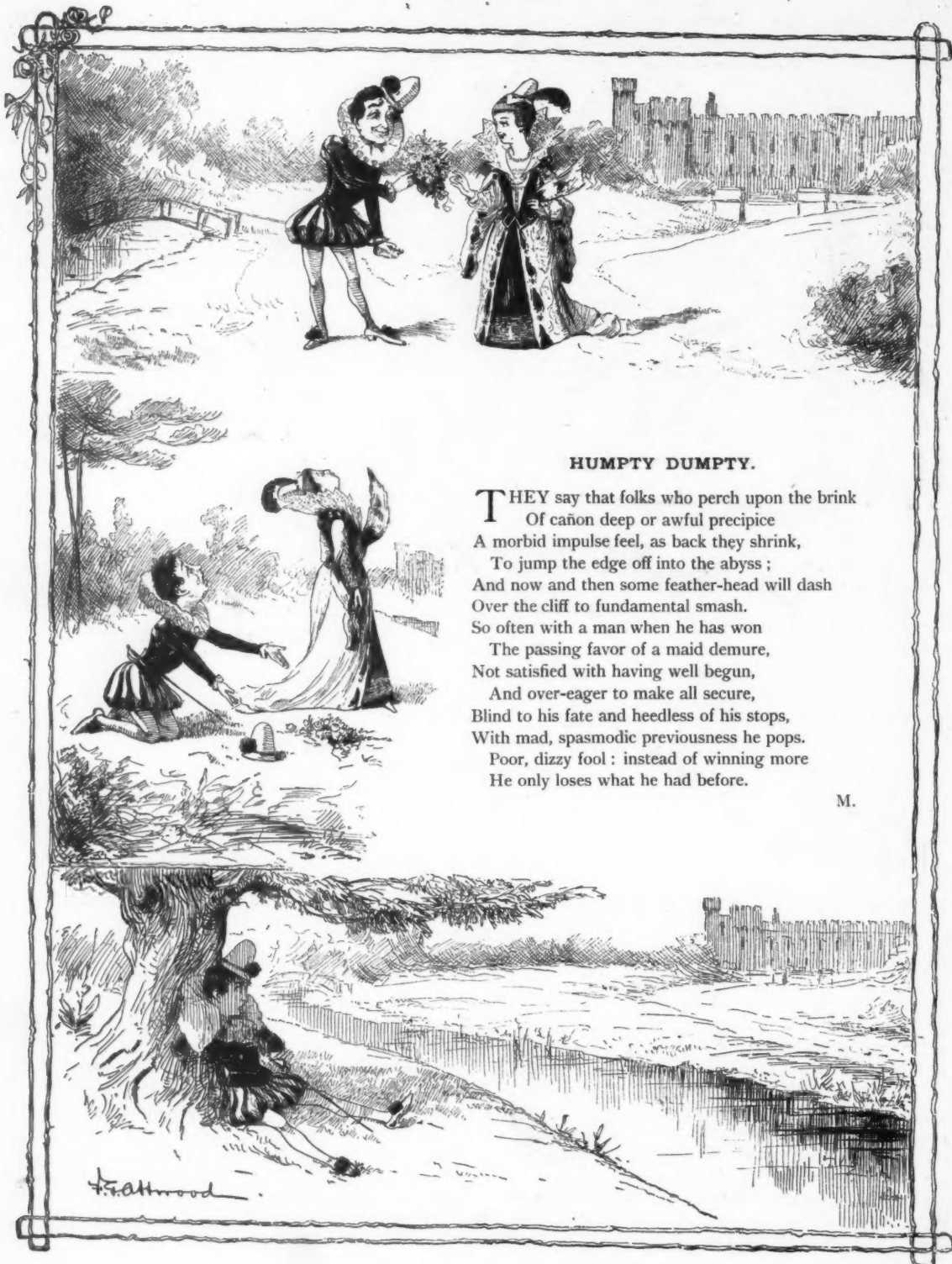
CHRISTMAS AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

'T WAS the night before next Christmas that your correspondent entered the snowy portals of the home of Presidents, as the honored guest of the incipient ex-ness who now occupies the Presidential chair. The President himself was absent, and probably was not aware of my presence, but I was there. Hardly had I crossed the threshold when I ran against a wizened-faced little individual whom I at first supposed to be a wax statue of Mrs. Hayes's husband, but who subsequently turned out to be none other than my good friend Santa Claus himself, pack on his back, and clad in his new winter soot fresh from the chimney corner.

He received me coldly at first, as was natural, the Republican furnaces having ceased to warm the building, but later

under the influences of some old Bourbon left in the wine cellar by the last Democratic incumbent, mixed with the contents of a half bottle of soda, the sole remaining relic of the Hayes regime, discovered behind the book-case, where Rutherford no doubt concealed it, Santa warmed and chatted quite entertainingly until the clock in the neighboring steeple chimed out an hour that made the children's friend take to his heels lest he should for the first time in the history of the world fail in going the entire rounds.

Santa gone, I sauntered into the red-room, and laying myself down on the sofa, was soon lost in sleep. I was shortly awakened by the sound of the most entrancing music, and lo! the whole room was ablaze with light, and dancing a cotillion whom should I see but Gen. George



HUMPTY DUMPTY.

THEY say that folks who perch upon the brink
 Of cañon deep or awful precipice
 A morbid impulse feel, as back they shrink,
 To jump the edge off into the abyss ;
 And now and then some feather-head will dash
 Over the cliff to fundamental smash.
 So often with a man when he has won
 The passing favor of a maid demure,
 Not satisfied with having well begun,
 And over-eager to make all secure,
 Blind to his fate and heedless of his stops,
 With mad, spasmodic previousness he pops.
 Poor, dizzy fool : instead of winning more
 He only loses what he had before.

M.

Washington, Thomas Jefferson and the two Adamases. Nor were they all, for in various parts of the room were scattered successive Presidents, from Andrew Jackson to the present incumbent. All ghosts! To be sure, Arthur and Grant were exceedingly healthy-looking ghosts, and little Hayes was a little too savory of earth to make one believe him one, but then he never had much spirit, anyhow.

Geo. Washington looked well in his wig and queue, walking arm-in-arm with President Arthur, and not one of the ghosts present seemed averse to walking so with our present ruler. Millard Fillmore felt rather bashful when his turn came, for his coat was by no means of so good a make or fit as Mr. Arthur's; not so Andrew Jackson, who grabbed the President by the arm, and assured him that in spite of his "— blasted dudishness, he was a blinketty-blank good fellow for the position."

Andrew Johnston seemed put out that Mr. Arthur had not followed in his footsteps and made Rome howl, but gave it as his opinion—a tailor's, too—that if he'd cut his clothes, Arthur could n't have been better dressed.

Mr. Hayes was about to make a remark when a terribly healthy voice for a ghostess caused him to sit down on himself, and he shortly after disappeared entirely.

Happening to look out of the window, I noticed many more well known faces peering in, among whom were Henry Clay, Fremont, Douglass, Seymour, Greeley, Tilden and another of more recent date, who kept sticking his head in at the door and yelling:

"T was the rain kept me away. Sorry, but 't was."

Just then Mr. Lincoln, who was always a wag, remarked that he knew it was an R. of some sort, but that he thought there were three of them to knock that ghost out.

At this there was a laugh, and Blaine, for the outside ghost was he, subsided for a minute, and then stuck his head in and began to sing:

"My name is Jacobus G. Blaine,
I come from the back—"

"What?" said Washington. "Is that James? Let me see him. He could!"

"Could?" said the assembled crowd.

"He was a bigger man than his country's Pop," said George. "I could not tell a lie!"

"Well, I can," said Hayes—"when I see one!"

"Very good joke, that," said Jefferson.

"Ever hear it before?" asked Madison.

"Once," replied Jefferson.

"When?" said Hayes, looking pleased, for they were beginning to notice him.

"The day before the Declaration of Independence was put through," said Jefferson, with a caustic grin.

Hayes retired once more.

Going to the window, I saw poor Horace Greeley's philanthropic face looking wistfully in. He smiled when he saw me, and leading over Mr. Tilden's apparition, said, in a loud whisper:

"I know what beat me. 'T was n't no three R's, nor no

local issue tariff, nor a three to one Commission, an' the man that says it was is a liar 'n a villain,—but you know the old gag. Whitelaw Reid supported me, and that was what knocked old Horace out, you bet. G. Washington told me so, and he never lied yet that I know on. He said he was glad thar was n't no *Triboon* in his time, or he'd a-had to break his record as a emblem of truth to git the paper's support."

"Whatcher talkin' about, Horace?" said Tilden. Doncher know any better 'n to talk that way about your paper? It told more truth in '76 'n you could put in G. Washington's life-time. It said I was elected the day after election. Told the truth once, anyhow."

"Yes," replied Horace, "but it took that back."

"True! true!" said the Spirit of '76. "It lacks sticking power almost as thoroughly as the new postage-stamps."

And while the outsiders were quarreling over the causes of their defeat, I withdrew from the window, and slipped unobservedly away as day dawned and their great ghostships folded themselves up in camphor to keep away the moths until next Christmas.

A CLUB MAN—Captain Williams.



A CURE FOR INSOMNIA.

"I WANT a bedroom here," said a very nervous man to a Coney Island landlady.

The man shook himself into a chair in the hotel parlor, dropped his valise and observed, "I have not slept since my birth."

"Then, why do you want a bedroom?"

"I am a victim of insomnia. Seven of my nurses lie in Evergreen. At school I studied Sanscrit and Anatomy. Dead roots and dry bones brought me no repose. Later I loved a girl devotedly. Her father descended one night at eleven and jeeringly said, 'Young man, you can't sleep here.' He derided my misfortune and I could not marry into his family."

"Have you ever tried?"

"I have tried everything. I have scored at a three days' cricket match. I have played chess by cable and whist with ladies who did not know the queen of spades from the deuce of diamonds. I have watched an amateur in Hamlet. He made me so weary, but I could not sleep."

"Do you take anything?"

"I take the New York *Tribune* and the *Independent*."

"Your active work may—"

"I have been janitor in a Butler headquarters. I drove the steam cooling fans in a café; through one December I ran an Essex Street mission for the conversion of the Jews. I



AN AFTER-ELECTION DRAMA.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO HAD "A LOT OF FIRST-RATE POLITICAL IDEAS."

opened a circulating library, filled with standard English works, on Mott Street. I have been a summer night's watchman in a Fifth Avenue house. I have been receiving teller in the Mulberry Street Savings Bank. I came to you from my apartments over a Harlem Police Station, for I seek the quiet of Coney Island winter."

The wooden animals in the merry-go-rounds hibernated. Snow birds nested in the big elephant's ear. A nor'west blizzard beat the record on a deserted lung-testing machine. Nature, mockingly, glacéed the rails of the coasters and spread a shimmer of ice around the roller skating rink. Day and night the sea and the man was sleepless.

Then he went to Philadelphia and found rest. People in that soporific town think he is in a trance.

E. P. COHEN.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F-Y GO-LD: Yes, Xmas is the time when Stock-Kings are hung.

R-sc-e C-nkl-ng: As between you and the editor of the *Tribune*, we are solid for you for Senator, but to a man of your integrity politics is an exceedingly cold profession. Do stay with us and adorn the Bar with that million-dollar practice of yours.

Pat-i: You are very melodious, but the genuine nightingale is cheaper in the long run, and you know, sweet warbler, that the longer you run the more you cost.

R. P. Fl-uer: It is time you were picked. This is a cold season for horticultural specimens, except in hot-houses, and if we know Mr. Cleveland, you will not be used to deck the Treasury.

H-nry Irv-ng: Connoisseurs in Hamlets who have seen the performances of the late Dan Bryant, Geo. L. Fox, Edwin Booth and the late lamented Charles Backus say that yours is second only to Booth's.

T. A. Hendr-cks: Sometimes, Thomas, the tail is big enough to wag the dog, but when a tail has been grafted from an old dog to a new one it is just as well that he remain satisfied with his lot. Be less prevalent, Mr. H., be less prevalent.

Santa Claus: The most appropriate gift you could give certain factions of the Republican Party would be a real nice warm day. Messrs. Butler and Dana we think would be pleased if you would organize a relief expedition to find them, while Mr. Whitelaw Reid would take it as a great kindness if you would give him a free pass to the Arctic regions where he can get warm.



A LADY is showing a visitor the family portraits in the picture gallery.

"That officer there in the uniform," she says, "was my great-grandfather. He was as brave as a lion, but one of the most unfortunate of men—he never fought a battle in which he did not have an arm or a leg carried away."

Then she adds proudly. "He took part in twenty-four engagements."

THAT'S ALL.—Scene; Refreshment-room at railway-station. Count H.: "Waiter, bring me the bill of fare!" (Waiter does so.) Count (after reading it): "Is that all?" Waiter: "Yes, sir." Count: "Horrible! Bring me the wine list." (Waiter brings it.) Count: "Is that all?" Waiter: "Yes, sir." Count: "Horrible!" A student who had overheard the above now called out: "Waiter, bring me the bill of fare." (Reads it.) "Is that all?" Waiter: "Yes, sir." Student: "Horrible! Bring me the wine list." (After reading it.) "Is that all?" Waiter: "Yes, sir." Student: "Horrible!" Here Count H. gets up in a towering rage, and approaching the student says: "Sir, are you aware who I am? I am Count H." Student: "Is that all? Horrible!" (Tableaux).—*Rheinisch Westfälische Zeitung*.

A MISUNDERSTANDING: His master—"Did you take those boots of mine to be soled, Larry?" Irish valet—"I did, sor; and see the thrif: the blag'yard gave me for 'm!—said they was purty nigh wore through!"—*London Punch*.

THEY were young and romantic, and although the minute hand was pointing to 12 o'clock they stood upon the porch gazing at the stars.

"That's Jupiter, dear. is n't it?" she murmured.

"Yes, pet, and that is Sirius," he replied, pointing to another star.

"Are you Serious?" she cooed.

He kissed her several times. Then he pointed upwards and said:

"That's Mars, dove."

"And that's pa's," she whispered, as a footstep sounded inside, and if the young man had n't scooted he would have seen more stars than he ever dreamed of. Her pa wears a 12½ with a brass toe.—*The Hatchet*.

FRENCH WIT.

HUSBAND and wife present themselves before the Divorce Court.

"What do you want, madame?"

"Divorce from that wretch."

"And you, sir?"

"Divorce from that vixen."

"The decree is refused—there is no incompatibility of temper. You both seem to be perfectly agreed. Call the next case."

"SOME people," said Mrs. Sharpnale, "measure love by gold. I measure it by its quality." "I measure it by quantity," said meek little Mr. Sharpnale, in feeble tones; "I measure it by the peck." "By the peck, you lunatic; what do you mean by that?" "By the hen peck," he gurgled hoarsely, and then all the rest of the night he wished he had n't said it.—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

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A CURIOUS AUTOGRAPH.

"At another time I saw on a desk a scrap of paper that had on it a comical likeness or image of a human skeleton in miniature—a profile view of the skull, the ribs, and the other bones, even to the foot. I wondered who the senatorial artist was, and in handling the paper I chanced to turn it another way. And what do you think it was? It was n't meant for a skeleton, after all. It was nothing else than a very hasty autograph of Senator——."

Read *The Recollections of a Boy-Page in the U. S. Senate*, in the December number of ST. NICHOLAS, if you cannot make out the autograph; the article will interest old and young. This is the Christmas issue, containing contributions from Whittier, Trowbridge, Stockton, Boyesen, Mary Mapes Dodge, Miss Alcott, and others. It costs but 25 cents and makes a superb present for a child. All dealers sell it. Now is a good time to subscribe (\$3.00 a year) through dealers or the publishers, The Century Co. New-York.

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WHY?

We understand that the son of the Reverend Dr. Burchard objects to having the popular histrionic donkey of the Casino addressed by the name of his revered father.

[This sentence is slightly equivocal; but our intentions were good.]

Now, of course, we like to see a son jealous of the paternal name. But it seems to us that the son of the Reverend Dr. Burchard is just a shade unreasonable in his recent remonstrance against Mr. Digby Bell's lightsome familiarity with the ass of the Casino.

Of course when Mr. Bell calls his histrionic colleague "Burchard," and when the audience, on hearing this appellation, incontinently goes into fits of reverberant hilarity, it is fair to assume that the popular mind traces a similarity between Mr. Burchard and the ass—the simple domestic ass of commerce.

But why should this fact rile the crystal spirit of the Reverend Dr. Burchard's son? What is there in the simple, gleeful comparison of his revered father with an ass that should wound his pride of lineage?

What has the Reverend Dr. Burchard's son against the ass?

The ass is an excellent and praiseworthy animal. The ass minds his own business. The ass never meddles in politics. The ass keeps his religion to himself. The ass does not speak ill of his neighbors. The ass is not an admirer of Mr. Blaine. The ass has never been known to express admiration for "smart" and unscrupulous politicians. The ass does not make public profession of sanctity. The ass does not try to arouse sectarian animosity. The ass is of a retiring disposition. The ass has no inclination to put himself unduly forward. The ass is not alliterative.

Many worse things than this might be said of a man. There are names much more unpleasant than the name of ass.

What, for instance, might not loyal and temperate citizens of the Catholic faith say of a Protestant clergyman who would denounce their religion as the ally of Drunkenness and Secession? Would not "ass" be a term of flattery beside the designation they would naturally apply to a man so narrow, bitter and uncharitable?

Why then should the Reverend Dr. Burchard's son object to the comparison instituted by Mr. Bell?

Let him take a lesson from the patient resignation which the ass exhibits under the circumstances.—*Puck.*

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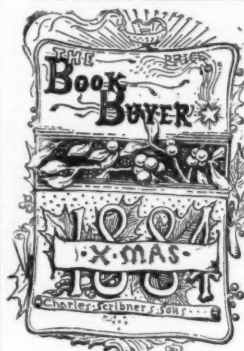
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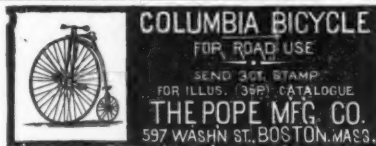
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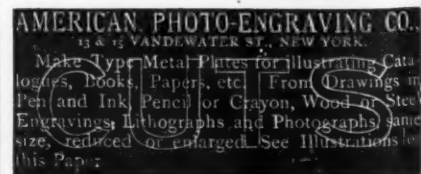
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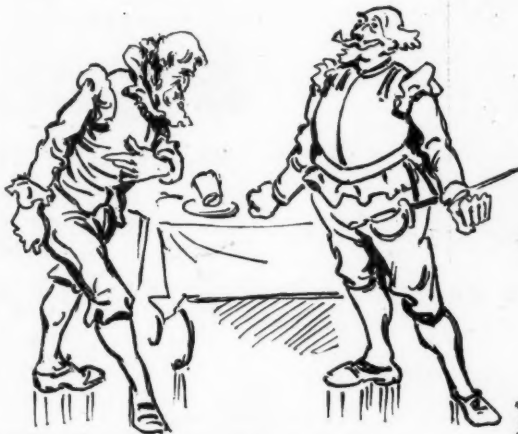
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• The Baron's Rescued Arms •

He baron's blade is dimmed with rust,
With rust his armor cakes,
His plate and cup aside are thrust,
His crest in anger shakes.

"Now who will clean," he cries in wrath,
This sword, these arms of mine?
What potent sage the secret hath,
Once more to make them shine?



Then forth a travelled vassal stepped,
Who knew of foreign lands.
Quoth he: "A mixture deftly yclept,
Awaits my lord's commands.

It polisheth whatever it meets,
As those who use it know;
Fame sings its praise and fortune greets
The great *Sapolio*."

Take forthwith he brought to view,
Which then and there was tried,
In sooth the metal shines anew,
The mighty baron cried.



That vassal wise shall knighted be,
Who brought this prince of charms,
Sapolio henceforth shall he
Wear for his coat of arms."

* What is Sapolio? It is a solid, handsome cake of scouring soap, which has no equal for all cleaning purposes, except the Laundry. To use it is to value it. What will Sapolio do? Why, it will clean paint, make oil-cloths bright, and give the floors, tables and shelves a new appearance. It will take the grease off the dishes and off the pots and pans. You can scour the knives and forks with it, and make the tin things shine brightly. The wash-basin, the bath-tub, even the greasy kitchen sink, will be as clean as a new pin if you use Sapolio. One cake will prove all we say. Be a clever little housekeeper and try it. Beware of imitations. There is but one Sapolio.—Enoch Morgan's Sons Co., N. Y.

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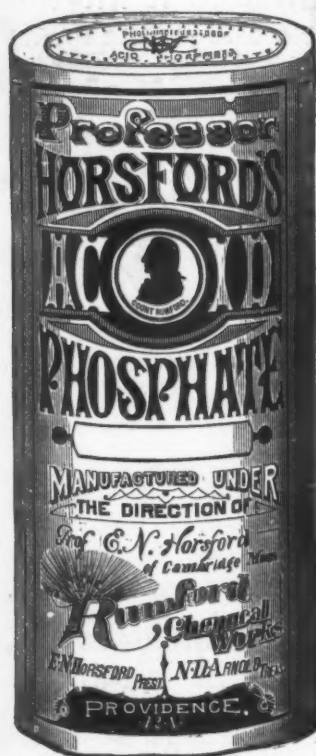
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